

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL NIACT IMMEDIATE

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 1 LINES 65 THRU 69 OMITTED)

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, KS, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON KOREA

1. FOLLOWING ARE UNOFFICIAL EXCERPTS CONCERNING KOREA
FROM PRESIDENT CARTER'S MAY 26 PRESS CONFERENCE. FULL TEXT
TO FOLLOW BY WIRELESS FILE.

QUOTE QUESTION: (NOT COMPLETELY AUDIBLE) ... NORTH KOREA
AS TO POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVING RELATIONS?

ANSWER: WELL IN THE FIRST PLACE, GENERAL SINGLAUB IS NOT
FIRED. GENERAL SINGLAUB WAS INFORMED THAT HE WAS NOT BEING
FIRED, HE WAS NOT BEING CHASTISED, HE WAS NOT BEING PUNISHED,
HE WAS BEING TRANSFERRED TO A NEW POSITION AT AN EQUIVALENT
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DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND STATURE. WE HAVE, HOWEVER,
CONSIDERED VERY CAREFULLY THE QUESTION OF OUR TROOPS TO
BE WITHDRAWN FROM SOUTH KOREA, REPUBLIC OF KOREA--GROUND
TROOPS. THIS IS A MATTER THAT'S BEEN CONSIDERED BY OUR
GOVERNMENT FOR YEARS. WE HAVE BEEN IN SOUTH KOREA
NOW FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS. THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A POLICY
OF OUR GOVERNMENT EVOLVED FOR PERMANENT PLACEMENT OF GROUND

TROOPS IN SOUTH KOREA. IN 1970 AND 1971 A FULL DIVISION OF TROOPS WAS WITHDRAWN. MANY LEADERS IN OUR COUNTRY AND IN THE ROK HAVE ADVOCATED COMPLETE REMOVAL OF GROUND TROOPS

FROM KOREA. MELVIN LAIRD, THE FORMER REPUBLICAN SECRETARY OF DEFENSE IS ONE OF THOSE. PRESIDENT PARK HIMSELF, THE PRESIDENT OF ROK, HAS CALLED FOR THE REMOVAL COMPLETELY OF AMERICAN TROOPS. THE ESSENCE OF THE QUESTION IS, IS OUR COUNTRY COMMITTED ON A PERMANENT BASIS TO KEEP TROOPS IN SOUTH KOREA EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT NEEDED TO MAINTAIN THE STABILITY OF THAT PENINSULA. I THINK IT'S ACCURATE TO SAY THAT THE TIME HAS COME FOR A VERY CAREFUL, VERY ORDERLY WITHDRAWAL, OVER A PERIOD OF 4-5 YEARS, OF GROUND TROOPS, LEAVING INTACT AN ADEQUATE DEGREE OF STRENGTH IN THE ROK TO WITHSTAND ANY FORESEEABLE ATTACK. I'M MAKING IT CLEAR TO THE NORTH KOREANS, THE CHINESE, THE SOVIETS THAT OUR COMMITMENT TO SOUTH KOREA IS UNDEVIATING AND IS STAUNCH. WE WILL LEAVE THERE ADEQUATE INTELLIGENCE FORCES, OBSERVATION FORCES, AIR FORCES, NAVAL FORCES, AND A FIRM OPEN COMMITMENT TO OUR DEFENSE TREATY SO THERE NEEDN'T BE ANY DOUBT ABOUT POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES CONCERNING OUR SUPPORT OF SOUTH KOREA. I THINK IT'S ACCURATE TO POINT OUT THAT OVERALL STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE 1940'S AND EARLY 1950'S WHEN THE KOREAN QUESTION CAME INTO MOST PROMINENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND US, THE PRC AND US, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRC AND SOVIET UNION HAVE CHANGED AMONG OTHER THINGS.

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SOUTH KOREA, BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN INCENTIVE AND DEEP DEDICATION TO PROGRESS NOW HAS ONE OF THE MOST STRONG ECONOMIES IN THE WORLD. THEIR GROWTH RATE LAST YEAR IN REAL TERMS WAS 15 . THEY HAVE A MASSIVE, VERY HEALTHY INDUSTRY IN STEEL, SHIPBUILDING, ELECTRONICS, CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO GROW IN TO A POSITION OF DEFENDING THEMSELVES. WE HAVE ALSO A COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN THE DEEP PURPOSE OF THE SOUTH KOREANS TO DEFEND THEIR OWN COUNTRY. COMPARED TO THE NORTH KOREANS THEY HAVE A 2-TO-1 ADVANTAGE IN TOTAL POPULATION; AND THEY HAVE MUCH GREATER ACCESS TO THE WESTERN INDUSTRIALIZED DEMOCRACIES FOR ADVANCED EQUIPMENT AND FOR TECHNOLOGY. SO FOR ALL THESE REASONS I THINK IT APPROPRIATE NOW FOR US TO WITHDRAW THOSE TROOPS. THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE, PRESIDENT PARK HAS BEEN INFORMED, AND WE WILL WORK VERY CLOSELY WITH THE SOUTH KOREANS FOR AN ORDERLY TRANSITION LEAVING THE GROUND TROOPS OF ROK STRONG ENOUGH TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AND LEAVING OUR OWN COMMITMENT TO THEM SURE. I MIGHT SAY THAT THIS HAS BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT BY

TWO THINGS: OUR COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN THE ROK AND ITS ABILITY AND A COMPLETE AWARENESS ON THE PART OF THE REST OF THE WORLD THAT OUR OWN COMMITMENT IS STRONG.

QUESTION: ...A DOUBLE STANDARD BETWEEN YOUR TREATMENT OF HIM AND YOUR TREATMENT OF ANDREW YOUNG, THE UN AMBASSADOR WHO HAS DISSENTED SEVERAL TIMES FROM AMERICAN POLICY AND YET HAS NOT BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM HIS JOB?

ANSWER: WELL, I KNOW OF NO INSTANCE WHEN ANDY YOUNG HAS VIOLATED THE POLICY THAT I DESCRIBED. IN THE CASE OF GENERAL SINGLAUB, AS I SAID EARLIER, HE WAS NOT PUNISHED. WE EVOLVED THE POLICY FOR SOUTH KOREA OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS AND I FINALLY MADE A DECISION AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY, THE MILITARY LEADERS, FORMAL MEETING OF THE NSC THAT WE WOULD WITHDRAW OUR GROUND TROOPS OVER A PERIOD OF 4-5 YEARS. A MEMBER OF THE JCS, UNCLASSIFIED

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BERNIE ROGERS, WENT TO SOUTH KOREA TO MEET WITH OUR OWN MILITARY LEADERS AND SOME OF THE SOUTH KOREAN MILITARY LEADERS AS WELL. OUR POLICY WAS EXPLAINED; GENERAL SINGLAUB WAS ONE OF THOSE. AN ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE PUBLICLY THAT A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, PHIL HABIB, AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JCS, GENERAL BROWN, WOULD GO TO KOREA TO EXPLAIN THIS POLICY TO THE KOREAN OFFICIALS, AND, OF COURSE, TO THE AMERICAN MILITARY OFFICIALS. AFTER THAT ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE, GENERAL SINGLAUB MADE A COMMENT PUBLICLY THAT IF THIS POLICY WAS CARRIED OUT IT WOULD RESULT IN WAR. IN MY OPINION, THAT WAS A VERY SERIOUS BREACH OF THE PROPRIETY THAT OUGHT TO EXIST AMONG MILITARY OFFICERS AFTER A POLICY HAS BEEN MADE AND I THINK TO SOME DEGREE, IT WAS AN INVITATION TO THE NORTH KOREANS TO BELIEVE THAT SOUTH KOREA WAS NOT ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF ITSELF, WHICH WE THINK THEY ARE. I THINK IT WAS AN INVITATION TO THE WORLD TO EXPECT AN INEVITABLE WAR, AND I CERTAINLY DON'T AGREE THAT THERE IS ANY CAUSE FOR A WAR TO BE EXPECTED. IN ADDITION TO THAT, I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE IN THE PROCESS NOW OF CARRYING OUT THIS POLICY, AND I DON'T BELIEVE THAT GENERAL SINGLAUB, BEING OUR NEGOTIATOR WITH THE NORTH KOREANS BY THE WAY, AND ALSO BEING THE THIRD PERSON IN COMMAND IN SOUTH KOREA, COULD HAVE EFFECTIVELY CARRIED OUT THIS POLICY WHEN HE HAD BEEN PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED AS BEING OPPOSED TO IT. THE OTHER POINT IS THAT I THINK HIS PRESENCE IN SOUTH KOREA ON A CONTINUING BASIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A DISTURBING FACTOR. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE FOCUS OF ADMIRATION AND ATTENTION OF THOSE WHO DO NOT WANT TO CARRY OUT OUR POLICY AND I THINK IT WOULD HAVE MADE IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIS SUPERIORS TO CARRY OUT THE POLICY IN HARMONY AND COOPERA-

TION WITH THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT. UNQUOTE VANCE

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